milk products are increasing even in rural areas with significant increase in the number of local consumers of milk from the village dairy cooperatives. The dairy farmers have very consistent perception about the strengths of the APCOS in organizing farmers and creating the 'common assets' for dairy based livelihood in villages and consider that APCOS have the capacity to overcome the challenges in dairy farming by reorganizing its strengths.

The study has revealed that dairy farming activity is profitable if farmers adopt scientific as well as cost effective strategies in dairy farming. The farmers who have obtained the required training in dairy farming were found to be earning reasonable return and the dairy farming practices are becoming supportive for reducing the input cost of agriculture and household expenditure. Training in multiple aspects of dairy management can be better facilitated by utilizing the existing support services and linkages in diary sector in the state where the APCOS can facilitate such programmes for the maximum benefit of its member farmers.

Since United Nations Organization is celebrating 2012 as *International year of Cooperatives* to acknowledge the contribution of cooperatives towards social development, the APCOS, the village level producer organizations can do introspective analysis about their strengths, weakness, opportunities and threats to reaffirm the importance of cooperative organizations in socio-economic development of the small and marginal dairy farmers of Kerala. The challenges in achieving the autonomy for cooperatives which alone can promote growth and empowerment of the members must be brought in for further discussions and debate so that goal could achieved at the earliest.

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